



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

June 23, 2005

# News Release

## **19 ILLEGAL ALIENS ARRESTED, CHARGED WITH FELONY FORGERY**

*They are accused of fraudulently applying for driver's licenses using real birth certificates*

MILAN, Mo. — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents and other law enforcement officers this week arrested 19 illegal aliens here who had fraudulently applied for Missouri driver's licenses using legitimate birth certificates from U.S. citizens.

Twelve men and seven women were arrested in the two-day operation which ended Tuesday. Those arrested, who are legally ineligible to obtain drivers licenses, are citizens from three countries: El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico.

The Missouri Department of Revenue requested ICE assistance with this operation since the people requesting these driver's licenses were believed to be illegal aliens and not U.S. citizens.

Law enforcement officials believe that these aliens illegally resided in other states and traveled to Missouri carrying legitimate birth certificates from people who live in Puerto Rico (10), California (4) and Texas (5). The aliens would then fraudulently present the U.S. birth certificates as their own and apply for Missouri driver's licenses. These aliens currently resided in and traveled from Kansas, Iowa, Michigan and Nebraska.

"This operation plugged a major hole in the ability to fraudulently obtain legitimate identification that would be accepted around the country," said Elissa Brown, ICE Chicago special agent-in-charge. "ICE routinely works with all varieties of law enforcement agencies to help secure identity documents, which is a national security concern." Brown heads the ICE Office of Investigations, a six-state area which includes: Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri and Wisconsin.

During the operation, three other alien men were arrested — from Guatemala and Mexico — on administrative immigration charges for being in the U.S. illegally.

The Sullivan County District Attorney has accepted these cases for prosecution. These cases may also be presented to the U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri for possible federal charges.

In addition to ICE, the following law enforcement agencies were also involved in this operation: Missouri Department of Revenue, Sullivan County Sheriff's Department, Sullivan County District Attorney's Office, Missouri State Highway Patrol, and Milan, Mo., Police Department.

This is an on going investigation.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*